

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowabel subject matter in claims 16-20.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-11, 13, and 15 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonhomme (U.S. Patent No. 6,954,618) in view of Fudaba et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,717,464; hereinafter "Fudaba"). Claims 4, 12, and 14 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonhomme in view of Fudaba and Jayaraman (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0037354; hereinafter "Jayaraman publication"; newly cited). Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonhomme in view of Fudaba and Jayaraman (U.S. Patent No. 6,901,243; hereinafter "Jayaraman patent"). Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonhomme in view of Fudaba, Jayaraman patent and Jayaraman publication.

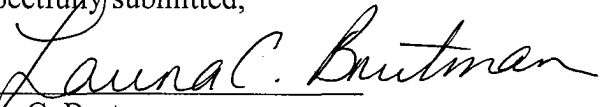
While not conceding the validity of the prior art rejections, but merely to advance prosecution, Applicant has placed the application in condition for allowance by amending each of independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13, and 15 to include the features of allowable dependent claims 16-20, respectively. The prior art rejections are therefore rendered moot.

In view of the above, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

In the event a fee is required or if any additional fee during the prosecution of this application is not paid, the Patent Office is authorized to charge the underpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2215.

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Respectfully submitted,

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